

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The Fayette County Parks and Recreation Department provides a gateway to a healthy, prosperous and connected community. On any given day, someone is being positively impacted through the Fayette County Parks and Recreation Department. It could be as simple as taking a walk on one of our walking paths, engaging in a class at one of our facilities, participating in a sports league, or just receiving the benefits of breathing clean air in our parks.

Our Department understands parks are crucial in the role of preserving natural resources, protecting open spaces, and connecting citizens to nature.

We are partners in combating obesity, physical inactivity, and unhealthy habits. We are a low-cost, fun-filled prescription for health and well-being.

Our staff works hard every day to ensure all members of our community have access to programs, facilities, places, and spaces that make our citizens' lives and our community great.

In 2014, staff administered 595 different classes and programs. These programs included such things as fitness classes, adult programs, cultural/nature programs, youth programs, and therapeutic programs. Approximately 5000 individuals took advantage of the variety of classes and programs. Of course, this number does not reflect the number of children who run and play in our parks or the individuals who utilizing the walking trails, tennis courts, basketball courts, etc.

The Department also facilitates picnic reservations in the various parks. In 2014, the pavilion was reserved by 202 individuals for family or friend gatherings. It was estimated that 10,343 utilized these pavilions during the reservation time periods.

An important cost saving measure for our patrons continues to be the ability to utilize the online payment process. Citizens have 24/7 access to register for classes and activities without having to expend fuel driving to the Recreation Office. A total of 373 payments were made with this service. Of these payments, 260 were from different participants.

INITIATIVES

- In 2014, the Board of Commissioners approved the Parks and Recreation Department's recommendation to amend the Fayette County Ordinance to include standard Parks and Recreation operating procedures. The ordinance now includes such items as hours of operation, facility usage, owner's responsibilities regarding animals in the park, parking restrictions, tobacco usage restrictions, guidelines for special permits, proper conduct, etc. within all Fayette County parks or recreation

facilities. The ordinance also aligned the penalty for all ordinances for Fayette County Parks as is stated in previous chapters of the County Code.

- The staff submitted revisions to the Facility Reservation Policy in order to incorporate some of the new park ordinances.
- Staff developed an annual parking pass policy for the parks which charge a parking fee. It was brought to the staff's attention that some local Fayette County industry employees who live outside of Fayette County enjoy taking their lunch break in these parks. This policy will allow these non-residents an opportunity to save money by purchasing an annual parking pass instead of the daily parking fee.

PARK IMPROVEMENTS

The Parks and Recreation Department was able to make park improvements to ensure the citizens continue to have quality facilities.

These improvements included:

- Installation of three park solar waste compactors
- Installation of new park entrance signs at all parks
- Turf planning 4 softball fields, 3 baseball fields and 3 fields at Brooks Park
- Completion of the Brook Park retaining wall
- Conversion of baseball fields at Brooks Park from single age group utilization to multiple age group utilization
- Beginning Phase II of the Kenwood Park erosion control plan
- Installation of new safety netting and poles at Kiwanis Park after ice storm damage took place
- Completion of Phase I of parking lot resurfacing project at Kiwanis Park
- Re-surfacing tennis courts at Kiwanis Park
- Adding pickle ball lines to tennis courts at Kiwanis Park
- Beginning lighting upgrades to McCurry Park soccer field #4 and softball field #6
- Repairing erosion control issues at McCurry Park softball field #7

Most of these improvements developed cost saving measures through the utilization of working with the Public Works Department and the Grounds Maintenance Department. Due to the staff efforts in these two departments as well as their equipment, costs for some of these projects were kept to material use only.

PARTNERSHIPS

In 2014, the Parks and Recreation Department continued to foster partnerships with various organizations. With the need to continue cost savings for our citizens, volunteerism and partnerships is imperative. We continue to serve thousands of youth through the partnerships with six different Youth Athletic Associations. We also continue to collaborate with the Fayette County Board of Education, so that the citizens can have the opportunity to recreate with indoor recreation activities.

In an effort to keep the youth of our community safe while participating in our programs, background checks were completed on any adult who was coaching or instructing the children. Through the partnership with the Sheriff's Office and 911, the Parks and Recreation Department was able to complete 1208 background checks.

To educate and train some of our citizens, we continued our partnership with the Fayette County Fire and Emergency Services Department and the 911 Department. Through these two partnerships, we were able to offer various camps and safety education classes throughout the year. These programs proved to be very popular with our patrons.

We also continue to collaborate with the Court System to utilize court-ordered community service workers for cleaning recreation facilities, maintaining park cleanliness, painting and various other duties as needed. A total of 438 hours were clocked in by these workers. Through these community service workers and staff's efforts, facilities continue to be well stocked, clean, and safe for the patrons at a cost saving measure of \$3,175.50.

In 2014, the Recreation Department formed a partnership with three different boy scouts who were trying to obtain the rank of Eagle Scout. Each scout chose a different project to enhance areas of McCurry Park. These scout projects included:

- The first scout built a small pavilion at McCurry Park South Soccer Complex. This pavilion's main purpose was for the soccer officials to have a covered area to meet on game days. Soccer families are also utilizing the area during practices.
- The second scout installed new landscaping around the McCurry Park North Concession Stand. Old shrubs were removed and new plants and flowers were installed.
- The third scout pressure washed and repainted the McCurry Park Picnic restroom.

These projects saved the county several thousand dollars in material and resources.

Also in 2014, the Parks and Recreation Department continued its partnership with Fayette Piedmont Hospital along with many other nonprofit entities to help make Fayette County a stronger and healthier community. Together we are able to offer programs which will help fight obesity, heart disease, cancer, and inactivity among our citizens.

As we move forward, staff will continue to serve and foster partnerships that will allow us to meet the needs of the community individually and corporately.

CONCLUSION

Staff believes Parks and Recreation is an essential service and valued asset that positively impacts the quality of life the Fayette County Citizens enjoy. Therefore, staff will continue to evaluate the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the services, programs, and facilities that the Parks and Recreation Department offers. Moving forward together with citizens, volunteers, and other county entities will help foster a livable sustainable community that everyone can enjoy.